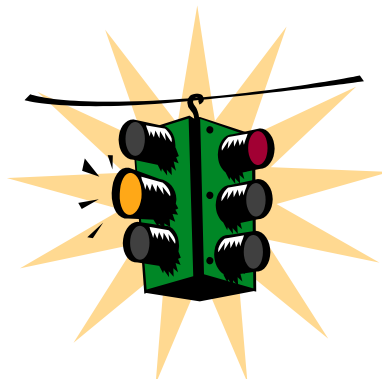


The Maryland Judiciary

Preparing for an Influenza Pandemic



Information Packet Contents Prepared September 2006

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Page(s)</u>
What are Seasonal Flu, Avian Flu, and Pandemic Flu?	2
What are Typical Flu Symptoms?.....	3
What is the Seasonal Flu Vaccine?.....	3
Who Should Receive a Seasonal Flu Vaccination?.....	3
How Does Seasonal Flu Differ from Pandemic Flu?.....	4
Why Should We Be Concerned About Avian Flu?.....	5
What Should You Expect if a Pandemic Occurs?.....	6
What are the Best Ways to Prevent Infection?.....	7, 8
What Items Should You Have on Hand for an Extended Stay at Home?.....	9
What Else Does the Judiciary Recommend?.....	10
Frequently Asked Questions.....	11 -16
Additional Resources.....	16

What are Seasonal Flu, Avian Flu, and Pandemic Flu?

Seasonal Flu

Influenza or “flu” is an infection of the nose, throat, and lungs caused by the influenza virus. It is not the upset stomach popularly called “stomach flu.” The flu is highly contagious and is spread by direct contact with infected people. Flu symptoms usually begin 1 to 4 days after being infected with the flu virus, so you can spread the disease to others before your symptoms even appear. There are two major types of influenza: Type A, which generally causes the most severe symptoms, and Type B, which causes symptoms similar to A, but usually less severe. The main way the flu is spread is from person to person in respiratory droplets of coughs and sneezes. These droplets move through the air and are deposited on the mouth or nose of people nearby. It can also be spread when people touch these droplets on a surface like a desk, then touch their own eyes, mouth, or nose before washing their hands.

Avian (or Bird) Flu

Avian flu is caused by influenza viruses that occur naturally among wild birds. The H5N1 variant is deadly to domestic fowl and can be transmitted from birds to mammals and in some limited circumstances to humans. There is no human immunity and no vaccine is currently available, although drug companies are working on developing vaccines in a short amount of time. **As of this printing, there is no avian flu in the U.S.** *See page 5 for reasons we should be concerned that H5N1 may become a pandemic.*

Pandemic Flu

This is a highly infectious human flu that causes a global outbreak, or pandemic, of serious illness. Because there is little natural immunity, the disease can spread easily from person to person. There have been three pandemics in the 20th century. **As of this printing, there is no pandemic flu.**

What are Typical Flu Symptoms?

- Chills
- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Runny nose
- Fatigue
- Extreme tiredness
- Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea
(Much more common among children than adults.)

What is the Seasonal Flu Vaccine?

The most important way to prevent seasonal influenza is vaccination. There is a new vaccine every year because the flu viruses change from year to year. The shot you received last year won't protect you this year. People at higher risk of complications should get the flu vaccine each year. The best time is between October and mid-November. However, the flu vaccine can be given any time during the influenza season (October to May). **An annual flu vaccine will not protect you against pandemic influenza.** See page 13, question 13.

Who Should Receive a Seasonal Flu Vaccination?

- Anyone 50 years of age or older
- Anyone with a weakened immune system
- Anyone 6 months to 18 years who takes chronic aspirin therapy
- Anyone with a serious long-term health problem such as heart disease, lung disease, or kidney disease
- Anyone living in a nursing home, assisted living facility, or rehabilitation facility
- Pregnant women in the 2nd and 3rd trimester
- Anyone coming in close contact with people at risk of complications (for example, health care workers or family members)

* *Be sure to check with your doctor if you have any questions or concerns.*

Where can you get a seasonal flu shot?

Find out at <http://cha.state.md.us/html/local2.html> or call your local health department.

How Does Seasonal Flu Differ from Pandemic Flu?

Seasonal Flu

Outbreaks follow predictable seasonal patterns; occurs annually, usually in winter, in temperate climates

Usually some immunity built up from previous exposure

Healthy adults usually not at risk for serious complications; the elderly and those with certain underlying health conditions at increased risk for serious complications

Health systems can usually meet public and patient needs

Vaccine developed based on known flu strains and available for annual flu season

Adequate supplies of antivirals are usually available

Average U.S. deaths approximately 36,000/yr

Symptoms: fever, cough, runny nose, muscle pain. Deaths often caused by complications, such as pneumonia.

Generally causes modest impact on society (e.g., some school closing, encouragement of people who are sick to stay home)

Manageable impact on domestic and world economy

Pandemic Flu

Occurs rarely (three times in 20th century – last in 1968) See chart on page 4.

No previous exposure; little or no pre-existing immunity

Healthy people may be at increased risk for serious complications

Health systems may be overwhelmed

Vaccine probably would not be available in the early stages of a pandemic

Effective antivirals may be in limited supply

Number of deaths could be quite high (e.g. in 1918 U.S. deaths = 675,000+)

Symptoms may be more severe and complications more frequent

May cause major impact on society (e.g., widespread restrictions on travel, closings of schools and businesses, cancellations of large public gatherings)

Potential for severe impact on domestic and world economy

Source: PandemicFlu.gov

Why Should We Be Concerned About Avian Flu?

- It is extremely infectious.
- It is being spread by migratory birds.
- It can be transmitted from birds to mammals and in some limited circumstances to humans.
- Like other influenza viruses, it continues to evolve.

Other Concerns

- If a pandemic occurs, it will be widespread, with outbreaks expected to occur simultaneously throughout much of the United States - and the rest of the world, thereby making it impossible to move human and material resources from place to place as would normally occur with other disasters.
- If a pandemic occurs, it will affect all of us - including people responding to the pandemic. For example, health care workers and other responders will be disproportionately affected. They will be at high risk of illness through exposure in the community and health-care settings, and some may have to miss work to care for ill family members.
- Moreover, a vaccine cannot be produced until a new pandemic influenza virus emerges and is identified, which will take some time.
- A pandemic will likely last for months - much longer than most other community-wide emergencies. Also, a pandemic may include “waves” of influenza activity separated by months. (In 20th century pandemics, a second wave of influenza activity occurred 3 to 12 months after the first wave.)

Source: flu.maryland.gov



What Should You Expect if a Pandemic Occurs?

1. Social Disruption May Be Widespread

- Plan for the possibility that usual services may be disrupted. These could include services provided by hospitals and other health-care facilities, banks, stores, restaurants, government offices, and post offices.
- Prepare back-up plans in case public gatherings, such as meetings and worship services, are cancelled.
- Consider how to care for people with special needs in case the services they rely on are not available.
- Ask your administrative official how work will continue during a pandemic.

2. Schools May Be Closed for an Extended Period of Time

- Help schools plan for pandemic influenza. Talk to the school nurse of the health center. Talk to your teachers, administrators, and parent/teacher organizations.
- Plan home-learning activities and exercises. Have materials, such as books, on hand. Also plan recreational activities that your children can do at home.
- Consider child-care needs.

3. Transportation Services May Be Disrupted

- Think about how you can rely less on public transportation during a pandemic.
- Stockpile food, water, and other essential supplies. *See page 9.*
- Prepare back-up plans for taking care of loved ones who are far away.
- Consider other ways to get to work, or, if you can, work at home.

4. People Will Need Advice and Help at Work and Home

- Think about what information the people in your workplace will need if you are a manager. This may include information about insurance, leave policies, working from home, possible loss of income, and when not to come to work if sick.
- Meet with your colleagues and make lists of things you will need to know and what actions can be taken.
- Find volunteers who want to help people in need, such as elderly neighbors, single parents of small children, or people without resources to get the medical help they will need.
- Identify other information resources in your community, such as mental health hotlines, public health hotlines, or electronic bulletin boards.
- Find support systems - people who are thinking about the same issues you are thinking about. Share ideas.

Source: PandemicFlu.gov

What are the Best Ways to Prevent Infection?

Although there is no pandemic as of this printing, the following will provide information to keep you healthy today and if or when a pandemic does occur.

1. Clean Hands Save Lives

- Wash hands after using the toilette, changing diapers, handling pets, or whenever you touch something you suspect could be contaminated.
- Wash hands frequently with soap and warm water, rubbing vigorously for 20 seconds. (Imagine singing “Happy Birthday” to a friend two times through.)
- Rub hands together to make a lather and scrub all surfaces, including wrists and under finger nails.
- Rinse hands well under running water.
- Dry hands with a clean paper towel and use it to turn off the faucet.
- Use an alcohol-based (60-95%) hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available. (To use it, apply the product to the palm of one hand, rub hands together, and rub the product over all surfaces of hands and fingers until hands are dry.)

2. Surface Cleaning Tips

- Use paper towels to clean up kitchen surfaces and throw the germs away with the towels. If you use cloth towels, launder them often, using hot water. Note: Don’t dry your hands with a towel that was previously used to clean up raw meat, poultry, or seafood juices.
- Wash your cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and countertops with hot, soapy water after preparing each food item and before you go onto the next food. Periodically, kitchen sanitizers can be used for added protection against bacteria. You can also use one teaspoon of liquid chlorine bleach per quart of clean water to sanitize surfaces. The bleach solution needs to remain on the surface needing sanitization for about 10 minutes to be effective.
- Replace excessively worn cutting boards (including plastic, non-porous acrylic, and wooden boards). Bacteria can grow in the hard-to-clean grooves and cracks.
- In your refrigerator, wipe up spills immediately, clean refrigerator surfaces with hot soapy water, and, once a week, throw out perishable foods that should no longer be eaten.
- Keep pets off kitchen counters and away from food.

More Ways to Prevent Infection

3. Cook Food to the Proper Temperatures

- Cook ground beef to at least 160°, roasts and steaks to an internal temperature of at least 145° degrees, whole poultry to 180°, and chicken breasts to 170°. (The only way to tell is to use a clean food thermometer.)
- Cook eggs until the yolks and whites are firm.

Can you get the flu from eating poultry? *See page 15, question 26.*

4. Coughing, Sneezing, and More

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Put used tissues in a waste basket immediately, not your pocket or purse.
- If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hand.
- Regardless, clean your hands after coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid touching hands to eyes, nose, mouth, cuts, or open wounds. Germs can live two hours or more on places such as doorknobs, desks, and tables.
- Stay at home when you are sick.

5. Maintain a Healthy Lifestyle

- Eat a balanced diet.
- Exercise regularly.
- Reduce stress.
- Get plenty of rest.

What Items Should I Have on Hand for an Extended Stay at Home?

Examples of food and non-perishables

Bottled water (1 gallon per person per day according to the Red Cross)

Ready-to-eat canned meats, fish, fruits, vegetables, beans, and soups

Protein or fruit bars

Dry cereal or granola

Peanut butter or nuts

Dried fruit

Crackers

Canned juices

Canned or jarred baby food and formula

Pet food

Other non-perishable items

Examples of medical, health, and emergency supplies

Prescribed medical supplies, such as glucose and blood-pressure monitoring equipment*

Soap and water or alcohol-based (60-95%) hand wash

Medicines for fever, such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen

Thermometer

Anti-diarrheal medication

Vitamins

Fluids with electrolytes

Cleansing agent/soap

Flashlight

Batteries

Portable radio

Manual can opener

Garbage bags

Tissues, toilet paper, disposable diapers

Source: PandemicFlu.gov

*Ask your medical provider if you are allowed additional prescription refills and medical supplies during a pandemic event.

What Else Does the Judiciary Recommend?

- The Emergency Disaster Preparedness Policy is being developed and will be available shortly. When it is available, please become familiar with it.
- It is strongly recommended that every employee take advantage of direct deposit. In the event of a disaster, you will be more likely to receive your money. Also consider receiving your deposit advice on-line. For more information call the Payroll Unit at 410-260-1735.
- Speak to your administrative official and colleagues about how work will continue during a pandemic or disaster.
- If you are a supervisor, consider what your employees will need from you if they are affected by a pandemic or disaster.
- Would others be able to do your job if you were not able to come to work? Would they be able to locate important information?



Frequently Asked Questions

from <http://flu.maryland.gov/faq.html>

1. What is the flu and how is it prevented?

- The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The best way to prevent this illness is by getting a flu vaccination each fall. For more information, see www.cdc.gov/flu/keyfacts.htm.

2. What's an influenza pandemic?

- An influenza pandemic is a global outbreak of disease that occurs when a new influenza A virus appears in the human population, causes serious illness, and then spreads easily from person to person worldwide.

3. What's the difference between "pandemic flu" and the regular seasonal flu?

- Pandemic flu is different from seasonal flu. A pandemic is caused by a strain of flu virus that is new or rare. Therefore, none of us have been exposed to it – as opposed to the regular seasonal flu that causes outbreaks every year. For more differences between pandemic and seasonal flu, see www.hhs.gov/flu/season_or_pandemic.html.

4. What about avian flu?

- Avian flu or "bird flu" normally infects birds, although these bird strains can sometimes infect small numbers of humans who come in close contact with them. Sometimes – not always – these bird strains can become more easily transmitted to people. If that happens, and the strain changes enough to become easily transmissible between people, it can result in a pandemic – a global circulation of a strain that really hasn't been seen in people before.

5. Is a pandemic inevitable?

- Pandemics tend to occur every 10-40 years. Almost all experts say that an influenza pandemic is inevitable. Therefore, it is important that we prepare properly. While we haven't learned to prevent pandemics, our ability to treat influenza improves all the time.

6. Has an influenza pandemic started?

- No. There is no pandemic today.

7. Why is there so much concern in the media?

- Scientists know that pandemics have occurred on a regular basis through history, and they are concerned that the avian influenza virus that is now found in Asia and some European countries (known as H5N1) could slightly change, or mutate, in a way that would allow it to pass easily from person-to-person.

8. How many people will get sick in a pandemic?

- There is no way to tell. Our ability to treat people improves constantly. But experts estimate that a quarter to a third of the population could be sick at one time.

9. Is Maryland prepared for a pandemic?

- We are more prepared than ever. Maryland has been working to prepare for a pandemic influenza outbreak since 1999. We were one of the first states to develop a pandemic influenza plan. However, we can always continue to improve preparations through better education of citizens, training of health care professionals, and medical innovation. Preparing for a pandemic is a big task that requires everyone's participation.

10. What can the average citizen do to get prepared for a flu pandemic?

- First of all, educate yourself by talking with your personal doctor and by reading from this website or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <http://www.cdc.gov>. Educate your family. People can also start practicing simple but important preventive actions, such as hand-washing, covering your mouth with a tissue when you cough, and staying home from school or work if you're sick.

11. If I get the pandemic flu, is there a medicine to take?

- Antiviral drugs may help prevent infection in people at risk and lessen the impact of symptoms in those infected with influenza. It is unlikely that they would substantially modify the course or effectively contain the spread of an influenza pandemic.

12. Does Maryland have a stockpile of antiviral drugs?

- The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has a supply of antiviral medications to share with Maryland and the other states. In a pandemic, even if existing antiviral drugs are effective on the new strain, demand for antiviral drugs will be high, which means that it will be necessary to take the other important steps to limit transmission of the virus. This includes good handwashing and respiratory hygiene. Other steps may include closing schools temporarily, encouraging people to work at home if possible and limiting large gatherings of people. Hospitals would take extra measures to isolate flu patients from healthy people.

13. Will the annual flu vaccine protect people against pandemic influenza?

- No, influenza vaccines are designed to protect against a specific virus, so a pandemic vaccine cannot be produced until a new pandemic influenza virus emerges and is identified. Even after a pandemic influenza virus has been identified, it could take at least 6 months to develop, test and produce vaccine.

14. Are the media and the general public just overreacting?

- It is good for many people to be concerned about the possibility of a pandemic so that we properly prepare ourselves. There is no way to know how severe a pandemic will be, but if we are prepared, we can minimize the effects of a pandemic.

15. Are our hospitals ready for a pandemic of flu?

- They are better prepared than ever. Contingency plans are in place in case they need more room for patients. Like everyone, hospitals need to continue to prepare and plan.

16. In a pandemic, will sick people be asked to stay away from others?

- Yes. People will be encouraged to stay away from school and work if they are sick. During flu season, you are less likely to get sick if you avoid gatherings of people, and the same would be true during a pandemic.

17. Will the military be quarantining people in MD?

- That probably won't be necessary. There may be roles for the National Guard, such as helping with the surge on healthcare facilities, or even simple things like helping to deliver supplies.

18. Will schools close if there is a pandemic?

- It may be necessary to close schools to prevent the spread of the pandemic. If your child is ill, he or she should stay home from school. If hospitals run out of space, they may need schools and other buildings to handle the overflow of patients.

19. Should I wear a mask?

- There's really no science that says using a mask would be helpful during a pandemic. But there might be certain settings where it would be a reasonable thing to do. There are a few special settings where we KNOW a mask is important, like for healthcare workers who are taking care of really sick patients who have respiratory symptoms.

20. Am I more likely to catch the flu if I attend meetings or sports events – places where there are crowds?

- Crowds increase the risk of exposure to all viruses. Again, there is not a flu pandemic currently.

21. Should the public be getting antiviral medications from private doctors now?

- No. These drugs have to be stored properly and they have a relatively limited shelf life. Some people who are concerned might want to check with their provider to see if they should avoid a particular medication. But please remember -- when we're talking about influenza, drugs are not necessarily the answer. We still need to remember to practice good hygiene measures such as frequent hand-washing, proper cough hygiene, and staying home from work/school when ill.

22. Will the federal government be in charge during a pandemic?

- A pandemic will require leadership and direction at all levels of government. While the federal government will play an important role, Maryland and other states are well prepared to handle a large-scale emergency like a pandemic. A pandemic is different from a natural disaster like a hurricane or a fire in several key respects. A pandemic will likely last longer (months) and a pandemic will affect many different areas at the same time.

23. What will we do if the strain is resistant to antiviral medications?

- This is a real possibility, so we have to be prepared to implement all of the other measures that will help control the spread of influenza, such as practicing good hygiene and limiting interactions between people.

24. Is Maryland prepared to give out vaccine?

- Yes. Part of the pandemic flu preparedness plan involves distributing vaccine. Health professionals have practiced these plans repeatedly. However, a pandemic vaccine cannot be produced until a new pandemic influenza virus emerges and is identified. Even after a pandemic influenza virus has been identified, it could take at least 6 months to develop, test and produce vaccine.

25. Once a vaccine is available, who would get it first?

- Initially, we will have limited supplies of a pandemic vaccine and it will need to go to those at highest risk of getting ill. We will work to get the vaccine to those groups.

26. Can you get sick from eating chicken or other fowl?

- You cannot get the flu from eating properly handled and cooked chicken, turkey or other fowl. Avian influenza is caused by a virus that is destroyed by the heat of normal cooking (minimum of 160 °F). Remember to wash hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds before and after handling raw poultry. For more preparation information, see www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Chicken_Food_Safety_Focus/index.asp.

27. I am a hunter and read that waterfowl could carry avian influenza. Should I be concerned and stop goose and duck hunting?

- No. Avian influenza naturally occurs in waterfowl and other wild birds. However, most of the naturally occurring influenza viruses found in wild birds aren't transmissible to humans. There are no known instances of people contracting H5N1 from contact with wild birds. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources regularly tests waterfowl and water birds in Maryland. All tests for H5N1 have been negative.

28. These additional websites might also help answer questions you may have about the flu.

United States Government

Frequently Asked Questions About Pandemic Influenza

www.pandemicflu.gov/general/faq.html

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

How Does Seasonal Flu Differ From Pandemic Flu?

www.hhs.gov/flu/season_or_pandemic.html

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Influenza (the Flu): Questions & Answers

www.cdc.gov/flu/about/qa/

World Health Organization

Avian Flu FAQs

www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/avian_faqs/en/index.html

Additional Resources

Maryland Flu Preparedness

<http://flu.maryland.gov/index.html>

Epidemiology & Disease Control Program

Community Health Administration

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

<http://edcp.org/influenza/index.html>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

www.cdc.gov

Hotline: 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)

English and Spanish 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

TTY: 1-888-232-6348

American Red Cross

<http://www.redcross.org>

Homeland Security

<http://www.ready.gov>

U.S. Food and Drug Administration Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition

www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/fttclean.html

The following
four pages are
posters.

Please check with
your
administrative
official to see if
they may be
posted in your
building.